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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 IO-13 BIB-01 HA-05 /090 W
----------016533 141550Z /40
R 141519Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6497
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
RUNPUQAMBASSY PARIS 0218
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 00312

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GE
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE ALLEGED DISSIDENT "MANIFESTO"
HEARD IN CERTAIN EAST GERMAN CULTURAL CIRCLES

REFS: BERLIN 236 AND PREVIOUS

1. IN CONTRAST WITH THE IMMDIATE REACTION IN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES TO THE BIERMANN EXPULSION OF LATE 1976, THE CURRENT "SPIEGEL AFFAIR" SURROUNDING THE MAGAZINE'S PUBLICATION OF AN ALLEGED DISSIDENT MANIFESTO (REFTELS) HAS YET TO EVOKE ANY AUDIBLE RESONANCE EITHER ON THE GDR CULTURAL SCENE OR,
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APPARENTLY, IN THE POPULATION AT LARGE. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE MANIFESTO IS BEING DISCUSSED AMONG THE PEOPLE, WHOSE ACCESS TO IT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY EXTENSIVE WESTERN MEDIA REPLAY. HOWEVER, OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION, BASED ON A VERY LIMITED SAMPLING CONFINED TO EAST BERLIN, IS THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE ASSUMING A CAUTIOUS WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE,

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WITH THEIR GREATEST CONCERN BEING FOR THE
CONSEQUENCES, E.G. A POSSIBLE HARDENING OF THE
INITIAL SECURITY CLIMATE IN THE COUNTRY. SO FAR,
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHER WOLFGANG
HARICH, WHO HAS BEEN QUOTED IN WESTERN MEDIA AS
CALLING THE MANIFESTO A FORGERY, INTELLECTUALS HAVE
NOT COMMENTED OPENLY ON THE MANIFESTO.

2. AT A PRIVATE GATHERING HOSTED BY THE DCM
ON JANUARY 11, BUT ARRANGED BEFORE EITHER SPIEGEL
ARTICLE APPEARED, SOME EAST GERMANS PROMINENT
IN FILMS AND THE PERFORMING ARTS OFFERED WHAT
MIGHT BE A GLIMPSE INTO CURRENT THOUGHTS ON THE
MATTER MAKING THE ROUNDS IN CULTURAL CIRCLES.
ONE PROMINENT FILM DIRECTOR, AN SED MEMBER NOT
KNOWN FOR AN ANTI-REGIME STANCE, SAID HE FELT
AFTER READING BOTH ARTICLES THAT THEY CONTAINED
CERTAIN THINGS WHICH WOULD DISTRUB THE PARTY
LEADERSHIP. HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT PARTS OF
THE MANIFESTO HE WAS REFERRING TO, BUT HE BELIEVED
THIS COULD CAUSE "THE SITUATION TO UNRAVEL",
AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO HARSH RESTRICTIVE MEASURES
WHICH THE REGIME COULD ENACT. HE ALSO SAID
HE WAS CERTAIN PEOPLE ALL OVER THE GDR WERE
TAPING THE CONTENTS OF THE MANIFESTO
BROADCAST BY WEST GERMAN MEDIA FOR SUBSEQUENT
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USE AND REFLECTION. A SENIOR EDITOR WITH THE
(EAST) "BERLINER ZEITUNG" WHO HAD ALSO
READ THE COMPLETE SPIEGEL REPORT SAID HE FELT
THE INCIDENT WOULD RESULT IN A GENERAL TIGHTENING
UP. HE EXPECTED TO SEE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS
ON GDR CONTACTS WITH WEST GERMAN JOURNALISTS
AND OFFICIALS FROM THE FRG PERMANENT REPRESENTATION.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE REACTION WITHIN CULTURAL
CIRCLES, ONE POPULAR TV AND FILM ACTOR
PREDICTED THAT THE INTELLECTUALS WOULD NOT BE
SO QUICK TO GET INVOLVED THIS TIME AS THEY DID
IN THE BIERMANN AFFAIR. FOR ONE THING, MANY OF
THE MORE VOCAL DISSIDENT INTELLECTUALS ARE NO
LONGER IN EAST GERMANY. ALSO, UNLIKE BIERMANN,
THE ANONYMOUS MANIFESTO AUTHORS ARE NOT KNOWN
TO COME FROM THE INTELLECTUALS' OWN RANKS. THUS,
THE ELEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AMONG
COLLEAGUES IS MISSING. IN THE BIERMANN CASE
THERE WAS BASICALLY ONLY ONE ISSUE, HIS EXPULSION,
AN ISSUE WITH WHICH INTELLECTUALS
COULD IDENTIFY. THE MANIFESTO, HOWEVER, BY STRIKING

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OUT AT MANY ASPECTS OF THE EAST GERMAN SYSTEM, BITES
OFF MORE THAN MANY INTELLECTUALS ARE WILLING
TO CHEW OPENLY. FINALLY, ACCORDING TO THIS
INDIVIDUAL, MANY INTELLECTUALS WHO PASSIVELY
SUPPORTED BIERMANN BUT WHO DID NOT PUBLICLY CRITICIZE
THE REGIME NOW FIND THEMSELVES BEING COURTED BY
THE REGIME. THIS TREATMENT CONTRASTS
SHARPLY WITH WHAT MOST HAD EXPECTED IN THE WAKE
OF THE BIERMANN AFFAIR AND ALSO TENDS TO DIMINISH
THEIR INCLINATION TO OPEN CRITICISM.

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4. ANOTHER SEMI-OFFICIAL GDR SOURCE HAS TOLD
US QUITE FIRMLY THAT HE BELIEVES THE ADMINISTRATIVE
LATITUDE GIVEN TO THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE
BY PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS HAS INCREASED
SHARPLY SINCE THE MANIFESTO'S PUBLICATION.

5. IT IS OBVIOUSLY TOO EARLY TO ASSESS WHAT
THE "MANIFESTO'S" LONGER-RANGE EFFECT -- IF ANY --

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WILL BE. FOR ONE THING, THE DEBATE AS TO ITS
AUTHENTICITY IS CONTINUING. WHILE ITS MESSAGE
MAY STRIKE RESPONSIVE CHORDS, IT DOES NOT APPEAR
AT THIS STAGE THAT IT WILL RESULT IN SERIOUS
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PUBLIC REACTION. BOLEN

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